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RUEHQD/AMEMBASSY QUITO PRIORITY 6255
RUEHTC/AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE PRIORITY 3518
RUEHGL/AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL PRIORITY 4170
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SUBJECT: GOC CONTINUES EFFORTS TO REESTABLISH STATE PRESENCE

REF: 06 BOGOTA 10526

SUMMARY

¶1. (U) The GOC created the Centro de Coordinacion de Accion Integral (CCAI) to integrate military, police civilian programs into a single, coordinated effort to establish GOC penetration of key conflict areas. CCAI works to ensure civilian health, welfare, educational, and economic development programs quickly follow military efforts, helping to consolidate GOC control and state presence. CCAI programs have suffered from interagency and personal rivalries, but interagency coordination is improving. In November 2007, CCAI launched an ambitious consolidation plan to establish civilian services in six municipalities in Meta, a historic FARC stronghold. The USG provided \$13.5 million to support CCAI activities in FY 2007, and plans to continue funding CCAI activities in out years. Some human rights groups criticize CCAI for failing to involve local officials and civil society in its projects. END SUMMARY.

CCAI'S MANDATE

¶2. (U) In 2004, the GOC created the Centro de Coordinacion de Accion Integral (CCAI), an interagency committee lead by Vice-Minister of Defense Sergio Jaramillo and Accion Social Director Luis Alfonso Hoyos, to promote short-term social and economic development in priority areas where Colombian security forces have established a security presence, but penetration by civilian institutions remains weak or nonexistent. CCAI's creation reflected the GOC's recognition that a purely military response to the FARC and paramilitary threats was insufficient to solve the country's security problems. Instead, GOC officials understood the GOC needed to complement the military effort with programs to establish a permanent police and government presence in newly secured areas. CCAI focuses on the departments of Meta, Choco, Cesar, Magdalena, Antioquia, and Norte de Santander-- which are centers of FARC or other illegal armed group activity.

¶3. (U) CCAI is located in the office of the presidency and includes representatives from approximately a dozen GOC

ministries and agencies, including Defense, Interior and Justice, and Development. CCAI does not have its own budget, and relies on support, funding and personnel from other agencies and ministries. Still, CCAI has mobilized almost \$85 million in spending by GOC agencies and ministries in 2007. The GOC hopes to expand that amount to \$100 million in 2008. The USG supports CCAI through USAID (technical assistance and training) and U.S. Military Group funding, which represents approximately 7 percent of the CCAI total budget. Spain and the Netherlands also support CCAI.

SECURITY CHALLENGES AND OBSTACLES

¶4. (U) In 2002 approximately 30 percent of mayors in Colombia were forced to govern outside their mostly rural municipalities due to a lack of security. By November, 2007, the GOC's military effort--supported by CCAI programs--has enabled almost all mayors to return to their municipalities. In particular, CCAI has reestablished state presence in six of the most insecure towns in Meta and Caqueta departments and enhanced GOC credibility and legitimacy. Still, security remains a serious concern in rural areas of the CCAI municipalities. The presence of the FARC and other armed groups and the high risk of attacks on GOC security services remain CCAI's main obstacle. Other concerns include a lack of political will in some local governments to work with CCAI, community sympathy for the FARC in some regions (Meta), and continued coca cultivation and drug trafficking.

¶5. (U) CCAI has made significant advances in reducing interagency infighting and institutionalizing coordination mechanisms. Initial CCAI efforts suffered from interagency and personal squabbles over overall strategy, budgets, and personnel requirements, especially between the Ministry of Defense and civilian agencies. Moreover, in many areas the military remains far ahead of civilian agencies, raising concerns within the GOC, local communities, and human rights groups. Still, CCAI continues to develop ways to promote effective coordination and communication.

CONSOLIDATION PLAN

¶6. (SBU) Vice Defense Minister Jarmillo spearheaded development of an ambitious plan to establish a permanent police and civilian presence in a former FARC stronghold in Meta Department. Major General Gilberto Rocha Ayala, military Chief of Joint Operations, told us the plan, known as the Consolidation Plan for Macarena, Meta Department (PCIM), focuses on six municipalities, including Uribe and Mesetas, which are central to the fight against the FARC. The PCIM calls for an integrated, interagency effort to regain state control, foster economic development, and support civil society. Due to region's importance as a coca cultivation center, the plan also lays out strategies to eradicate illegal crops, create legal industries, recover national parks and reserves, and establish a functioning judicial system. On November 8, the GOC released a draft presidential decree outlining the PCIM.

¶7. (SBU) In the plan, CCAI will for the first time establish a joint civil-military fusion center, headed by a three-person team, with military, police and civilian representatives. The fusion center will be based in Vista Hermosa to coordinate the military, policing, development, and judicial aspects of the PCIM. The CCAI's effort in La Macarena and the establishment of the CCAI fusion cell in Vista Hermosa are intended to serve as a model for similar efforts in other regions, such as Narino and Bolivar (Montes de Maria).

CCAI'S DEPLOYMENT TO MACARENA

¶8. (U) In early October, CCAI coordinated the return of 100 police officers to the small town of La Julia in Uribe Municipality to re-establish security and begin to provide long-term public services. On October 8, Minister of Defense Juan Manuel Santos, Armed Forces Commander Freddy Padilla, National Police Commander Oscar Naranjo, and Emboffs traveled to La Julia to meet with local authorities ad show support for CCAI programs. Santos told the people of La Julia that the GOC was back, and that the time of FARC control in the region was over. Santos told us that a goal of the trip was to change local perceptions of the GOC and to delegitimize the FARC. The GOC is working to win over a local population that has had close ties to the FARC for decades. Though the GOC does not fully control the region, it intends to use high-level visits and major public events, such as the return of police to La Julia, to convey the message that the GOC is committed to the region for the long-term.

USG FOCUS AND SUPPORT

¶9. (SBU) In support of CCAI programs, the USG is funding technical assistance, training, infrastructure and small community based projects in areas such as Meta, Choco and Antioquia. It also plans to expand its support to ongoing CCAI efforts in Bolivar (Montes de Maria). The USG provided USD 13.5 million in FY07 funds to CCAI through USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (\$8 million), USAID's Regional Governance Consolidation Program (RGCP) (USD 3.5 million) and the Milgroup (USD 2 million). USAID funds support small, high-impact community projects in Meta and plans to expand into Bolivar (Montes de Maria) in 2008. In mid-October, DoD approved USD 4 million in Section 1207 funds for USAID programs to support CCAI. USAID will soon add an alternative development component to the program in Meta. Through the RGCP, USAID is also providing assistance to 26 CCAI-targetted municipalities with USD 3.5 million in FY07 and USD 16.5 million over five years. The U.S Military Group is providing USD 2 million in FY07 funds to provide community centers, schools, and health clinics in CCAI areas.

WAY AHEAD

¶10. (U) In 2008, the majority of CCAI's effort will focus on La Macarena. Still, CCAI will also work to increase social investment to establish GOC credibility in targeted regions; strengthen CCAI's mandate over ministries and budgets; and to develop an inter-agency strategy for CCAI expansion. In response to criticism from local and international human rights groups, CCAI plans to brief civil society on its programs, as well as its efforts to incorporate local officials into CCAI decision making. Some human rights groups complain CCAI relies too much on the military to implement programs, strengthens national agencies at the expense of local officials, and fails to consult with civil society.

Brownfield